

ABSTRACT

A system and method for allowing a user to identify and locate products for purchase that include, but are not limited to, products listed in an electronic catalog. The described system and method accepts from the user, via a network, a request for product information. The system then uses the request to search a database to determine if the database contains the requested product information. If the database contains the requested product information, the product information from the database is returned, via the network, to the user. If, however, the database does not contain the requested product information, the request for product information is forwarded to a sourcing management system that initiates a search to gather the product information from third party sources. Any relevant gathered product information is returned to the user, via the network. In addition, the database or electronic catalog is updated to reflect the newly gathered product information. In this manner, the subject system and method provides users access to an open and dynamically expansible catalog.